

Appl. No. 10/013,078
Amdt. dated February 1, 2006
Reply to Office Action of October 12, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Please amend claims 5 and 6 as follows.

1-4 (cancelled)

5. (currently amended): A method of detecting misappropriation of goods in a self-checkout lane in a store, the self-checkout lane having an incoming goods path and a goods collection zone, and goods being passed, in service, from the incoming goods path into the goods collection zone; the incoming goods path including a product scanner electrically coupled to a processor, and the goods collection zone including a weighing scale electrically coupled to the processor, the method being performed by a processor and comprising the steps:

- (a) receiving input from the product scanner identifying goods introduced by a customer into the incoming goods path;
- (b) controlling one or more barriers at least partially surrounding so as to restrict access by a customer to the goods collection zone so as to restrict access to goods collecting in the goods collection zone during introduction of goods into the incoming goods path and introduction of goods into the goods collection zone;
- (c) calculating, by referring to a record of product weights, a total weight value representative of the total weight of the goods introduced into the incoming goods path;

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(d) weighing the goods introduced into the incoming goods path, once collected at the goods collection zone, by the weighing scale;

(e) receiving input from the weighing scale specifying the total weight of the goods once received-collected in at the goods collection zone; and

(f) comparing the said total weight value of the goods introduced into the incoming goods path with the said total weight of the goods collected at the goods collection zone and calculating a discrepancy between the said weights; and

(g) if the calculated discrepancy exceeds a predetermined value, inhibiting conclusion of a transaction for purchase of goods introduced into the incoming goods path and assembled-collected in the goods collection zone and continuing to control the one or more barriers at least partially surrounding the goods collection zone so as to restrict access to the goods collection zone until the discrepancy is resolved and the transaction is concluded.

6. (currently amended): AThe method of detecting misappropriation of goods as claimed in claim 5 ~~wherein~~, further comprising:

notifying store personnel ~~or operating an alarm~~ if the calculated discrepancy is greater than the predetermined value.

Please add the following new claims:

7. (new): The method of claim 5 further comprising:

operating an alarm if the calculated discrepancy is greater than the predetermined value.

8. (new): The method of claim 5 wherein the goods collection zone is large enough to hold a shopping cart full of items.

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9. (new): The method of claim 5 wherein the weighing scale is positioned beneath the goods collection zone.

10. (new): The method of claim 9 wherein the goods collection zone further includes a conveyor.

11. (new): The method of claim 9 wherein the weighing scale is shaped and sized so as to substantially fill the goods collection zone.

12. (new): The method of claim 5 wherein the step of calculating a total weight value by referring to a record of product weights further comprises:

weighing loose grocery items in the incoming goods path.

13. (new): The method of claim 5 further comprising:
automatically retracting the one or more barriers at least partially surrounding the goods collection zone when the calculated discrepancy is less than the predetermined value and payment for the collected goods has been made.

14. (new): A self-checkout lane for purchasing goods comprising;
a processor;
a database containing records of product weights;
an incoming goods path for receiving incoming goods, the incoming goods path having a scanner electrically coupled to the processor to scan the goods introduced to the incoming goods path, the processor calculating a total weight value of the scanned goods by accumulating product weights of the scanned goods stored in the database;

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a goods collection zone for collecting and weighing the goods collected at the goods collection zone, the goods collection zone including a weighing scale electrically coupled to the processor to report the total weight of all the goods collected at the goods collection zone, the processor comparing the said total weight value of the scanned goods with the said total weight of the goods collected at the goods collection zone and calculating a discrepancy between the said weights; and

one or more barriers at least partially surrounding the goods collection zone, under the control of the processor, to restrict access to goods collected at the goods collection zone, the processor inhibiting conclusion of a transaction for purchase of goods if the calculated discrepancy exceeds a predetermined value.

15. (new): The self-checkout lane of claim 14 wherein the processor notifies store personnel if the calculated discrepancy is greater than the predetermined value.

16. (new): The self-checkout lane of claim 14 wherein the processor operates an alarm if the calculated discrepancy is greater than the predetermined value.

17. (new): The self-checkout lane of claim 14 wherein the goods collection zone is large enough to hold a shopping cart full of items.

18. (new): The self-checkout lane of claim 14 wherein the weighing scale is positioned beneath the goods collection zone.

19. (new): The self-checkout lane of claim 18 wherein the goods collection zone further includes a conveyor.

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20. (new): The self-checkout lane of claim 18 wherein the weighing scale is shaped and sized so as to substantially fill the goods collection zone.

21. (new): The self-checkout lane of claim 14 wherein the incoming goods path includes a second weighing scale and wherein the calculated total weight value includes the weight of loose grocery items introduced to the incoming goods path.

22. (new): The self-checkout lane of claim 14 wherein the processor automatically retracts the one or more barriers at least partially surrounding the goods collection zone when the calculated discrepancy is less than the predetermined value and payment for the collected goods has been made.